

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2011

The Honorable Lisa Madigan
Office of the Attorney General
500 South Second Street
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Attorney General Madigan,

We write to you in regard to your recent directive to the Illinois State Police regarding Firearm Owners Identification (FOID) Cards.

As you know, a reporter for the *Associated Press* submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to find out the names of all FOID cardholders in the State of Illinois. The Illinois State Police, acting in the interest of protecting the privacy of law-abiding firearm owners, and also the interest of public safety, denied the FOIA request.

On March 1, 2011, your office sent a letter to the Legal Counsel of the Illinois State Police. In your letter, you mandated that the Illinois State Police publicly release the names of all FOID cardholders in the State of Illinois.

We greatly disagree with your directive, and respectfully ask you to rescind your decision. Since the inception of the FOID card system in the mid-1960s, the Illinois State Police have always considered the personal information confidential, and kept the list of state firearm owners in an internal law enforcement database. There is no need to release this information to the general public, and doing so would be an unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of many of our constituents. The Illinois State Police are tasked with the responsibility of enforcing FOID requirements, and are fully capable of doing so.

The State of Illinois has never released FOID cardholder information before, and doing so now would be unprecedented in our State. Ensuring the privacy rights of our constituents is of the upmost importance to us, and we believe that releasing the information does not respect the privacy of law-abiding gun owners. We are aware that there are bills in the Illinois Legislature that would ensure the privacy of our state's 1.3 million FOID cardholders.

Publicly releasing the personal information of gun owners seems more like an intimidation tactic to discourage the lawful ownership of firearms than a way to serve the public interest. The release of this information could also lead criminals to use the information to target homes for burglary in order to steal firearms that they cannot lawfully acquire. This could cause otherwise


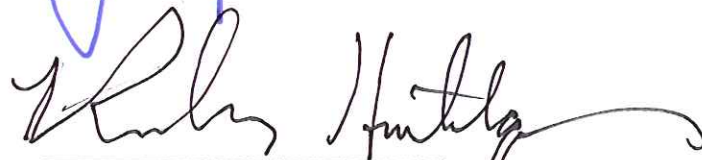
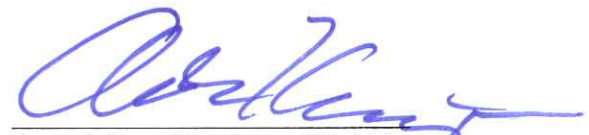
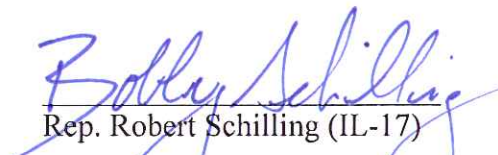
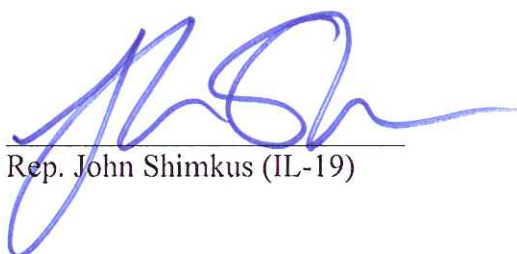
law-abiding citizens to decide that they would rather break the law by not getting a FOID card, because they do not want to be on a criminal's shopping list.

It should also be noted that by releasing FOID cardholder information, it would also be made public who does *not* own a firearm. The possible consequences of releasing this information could be rather devastating, not only to gun owners, but also to non-gun owners. This could be comparable to the State releasing a list of everyone who does not have an alarm system in their home. While this idea might sound great to a criminal, we would prefer to side with law-abiding Illinoisans and their families, who would not like such information to be made available to the general public, as it is not in the public's interest.


Instead of encroaching on the rights of those who have followed the legal pathway to own a firearm, it seems that the public would be better served by prosecuting those who have actually broken existing firearm laws.

We respectfully ask you to rescind your decision, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Rep. Aaron Schock (IL-18)
Rep. Jerry Costello (IL-12)
Rep. Robert Dold (IL-10)
Rep. Randy Hultgren (IL-14)
Rep. Tim Johnson (IL-15)
Rep. Adam Kinzinger (IL-11)
Rep. Peter Roskam (IL-6)
Rep. Robert Schilling (IL-17)
Rep. John Shimkus (IL-19)
Rep. Judy Biggert (IL-13)


Rep. Donald Manzullo (IL-16)


Rep. Joe Walsh (IL-8)